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WASHINGTON, DC- U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon voted today in support of the Methamphetamine Remediation Research Act of 2007 (H.R. 365), which overwhelmingly passed the House with bipartisan support. This bill will help communities across Louisiana clean up methamphetamine labs and the toxic mess they leave behind. Specifically, the bill charges the Environmental Protection Agency with the development of health-based guidelines to assist state and local authorities in cleaning up former meth lab sites. Rep. Melancon co-sponsored the legislation and, as a member of the Science and Technology Committee, voted several weeks ago to send the bill to the full House for a vote.

"In just the past few years, meth use and production has exploded across Louisiana," Rep. Melancon said.

"Two-thirds of the labs that produce this homemade drug are located in residential communities, threatening both the building's neighbors and whoever moves into the space in the future. Local law enforcement is working hard to shut down meth labs, and this bill will help guide their efforts to clean up the toxic waste left behind."

The chemicals required to manufacture meth are extremely toxic and many are potentially flammable or explosive. Nearly one in five meth labs are found because they caused fires or explosions, which can result in injuries or death for meth producers, their families, and first responders. Manufacturing meth also produces an enormous amount of toxic waste - five to seven pounds of waste per pound of meth - as well as dangerous residue which can collect on countertops and floors, and be absorbed into furnishings, carpets and walls. Future residents of former meth labs are often unknowingly exposed to toxic chemicals, and children are especially vulnerable.

H.R. 365 authorizes \$1.75 million in funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish a program of research on residues from the production of methamphetamines and work with state and local officials to ensure all levels of government are aware of and using best practices for meth lab recovery and remediation.

The bill also authorizes \$750,000 for the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to begin research on the development of meth detection equipment specifically for use in the field by first responders, as well as aid the EPA in the establishment of voluntary guidelines for assessment and remediation of meth labs.

Finally, the bill directs the EPA to work with the National Academy of Sciences to study the long-term health impact of exposure to meth labs on children and first responders and recommend an agenda for the EPA research program.

"This bill will protect innocent families against the aftereffects of methamphetamine production - and make our communities cleaner and safer to live in," said Rep. Melancon.

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